

Life Line:

EMMCO West, Inc.

Draft 4 Just Released From the DOH

The PA Department of Health Bureau of EMS has released Draft 4 of the EMS regulations. You can download the newest version from our website under Breaking News (home page). Take some time to review the newest changes. These regulations will define the EMS system in the Commonwealth. You may forward comments about the proposed regulations to EMMCO West. We will compile the comments and forward them to the Department of Health. Please be sure to reference which section of the regulations to which you are commenting.

Those that have renewed -----Congratulations!

Congratulations to the services that have received their renewed license or recognition since October 2010:

Cambridge Area Volunteer Ambulance Service
Crescent Hose Company Ambulance
Farrell Fire Department QRS
Linesville Area Ambulance Service
McGonigle Ambulance Service
Platea Volunteer Fire Company
Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department QRS
Summit Township Volunteer Fire Department
Tionesta Ambulance Service
Wesleyville Hose Company

EMMCO West wishes to thank them all for their cooperation during this licensure or recognition process. It was a pleasure to work with all of you. We'd like continue to remind agencies that as their license renewal approaches please be responsible and get the entire renewal process completed in a timely manner. The agency will lessen having a lapse in their license which could in turn have a lapse in their ambulance license, which can affect their reimbursements.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Public Safety Radio System Rebanding Challenges

Current public safety radio systems use a 25 kHz bandwidth (i.e. broad bandwidth), but tomorrow's public safety radio systems will need to transition to a narrow bandwidth (12.5 kHz). Within the coming year, a transition of broad bandwidth to narrow bandwidth will begin occurring in the EMMCO West region. This transition will affect every public safety radio system user, including police, fire, hospitals, and EMS. *(Note, this rebanding affects all radio systems, not just public safety radio systems. For this article, public safety systems are specifically addressed.)*

The rebanding transition affects only **VHF High band and UHF radios**. Any radio system between the 150 – 512 mHz range is affected by this rebanding initiative. *(Note, VHF low band radio systems are not affected by this transition process, this includes low band pagers.)*

The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has mandated that all radio systems affected by the transition be updated by January 1, 2013. Radios including portables, mobiles, base stations, and even pagers are affected by this transition process. The FCC license that the public safety agency possesses will need to be updated to the new frequencies as part of the transition process.

Regional PSAP (public safety answering points) are developing transition timetables for each county in the EMMCO West region. County and regional communication committees have been meeting with public safety system stakeholders regarding this transition process. The following is a tentative implementation timetable for each county in the EMMCO West region:

County	Timeframe
Clarion	Spring 2012
Crawford	September 2012
Erie	Fall 2012
Forest	Fall 2012
Mercer	1 st Quarter 2012
Venango	Fall 2012
Warren	July 2012

As the planning process in each county goes forward, more specific timeframes will be identified. The transition timeframes will vary from county to county. It will be a gradual transition process that will involve tower site by tower site upgrades. EMMCO West will post each county's implementation plan on its website, (www.emmco.org).

EMS System Awareness

Given the transient nature of EMS, knowledge of what county has switched over to narrowband frequencies will be crucial. In preparation of this transition, it is recommended that EMS agencies proactively install narrowband frequencies, along with their existing talk groups for their primary dispatch or medical command channels. This will enable an EMS agency to easily transition to another area's communication system configuration. As you can see from the table above, there will be a wide variation in the implementation of the narrowband transition process across the EMMCO West region.

Hardware Considerations

Most portables, mobiles, and base station radios have been made with broad and narrow bandwidth capabilities over the past 5 – 7 years. Public safety agencies will need to have their public safety radio vendor assess their agency's radio compatibility to the narrowband process.

Pager Considerations

Only select types of pagers will work on the narrowband frequencies. Motorola Minitor 5 Pagers (and/or similar make-model) is the only pager that will work on the narrowband frequency. Public safety agencies that use a Minitor 2 system to activate warning devices (i.e. sirens) will not work on the narrowband frequency. *(Note: Low band pagers are not affected by this change)*

Transition Process

As the transition process begins in each county, public safety agencies will need to transition their radios to the new narrowband frequencies. Public safety agencies will need to follow the advisories issued by their county PSAP centers to assure their continued communication system connectivity. Not all radio systems will be simultaneously transitioned to narrowband. The use of broad and narrow bandwidths will likely occur during the transition process within each county.

Radio Vendors

Public safety radio vendors are ready to assist public safety agencies transition to the narrowband frequencies. Radio vendors can advise if the public safety radio equipment is narrowband capable. Public safety agencies are encouraged to have their radio equipment evaluated prior to the transition timeframe for their county. Dual installation of broad & narrow bands for public safety radios will potentially lessen last minute communication system challenges for EMS agencies.

PSAP centers are available to assist public safety agencies during the narrowband transition process. EMMCO West will post implementation timetables and updates on its website to assure public safety agencies have the latest information regarding the narrowband transition process.

A DAY IN THE LIFE SERIES: PART ONE

CHRIS HEILE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Perhaps it would be of benefit to do a series of articles on typical days at the EMMCO West office. There are probably many people out there, who wonder what we do at the office. Some perhaps who think we do nothing but sit around looking for ways to harass EMS agencies. That is pretty far from the truth. There's enough going on that we don't go looking for trouble. In fact, sometimes it seems like trouble comes looking for us. Regardless, we all have contractual and developmental duties, as determined by the Department of Health or our Development Plan. I must admit, 11 years ago when I came on board, I did not expect the kind of responsibility that goes with the job. We'll start with a day like today (around the 10th of the month) to use as an example as a great deal goes on the first and second week of each month.

- 7:50 Arrive at the office. If it is winter, I may have to fire up the snowblower and move snow from the sidewalk, in front of the garage, and in front of the warehouse. (the landlord is not the best snow plower)
- 8:30 Put the snowblower away. Other people have spread salt on the sidewalk and in front of the doors. Come in and warm something up for breakfast, pour a large mug of water, and make a cup of coffee.
- 8:40 Check emails, review and forward missed call and suction reports for Sue to enter.
- 9:00 Download PCR data from one of 3 primary sources. Unzip the file and rename each file per Dept. Of Health specifications. (This accounts for about a third of the services' data. The rest will be done in subsequent days.)
- 9:20 Run PCR data through a validator. Each file is validated for data integrity. This involves opening a program, finding the schema to which the data is compared, selecting the file and choosing the validate option. Any errors will display, which are then sent to the vendor and/or the service for correction. There are only a few vendors left who consistently have errors. Let's just say that this is a good vendor otherwise, the rest of the day would be spent trying to figure out what is wrong and communicating with the vendor and/or service to make corrections. Open desk and grab a granola bar. Make 2nd cup of coffee (decaf).
- 9:50 Take phone call from service asking whether a 16 year old EMT is allowed to ride in the back of the ambulance by themselves. Answer question, send copy of Child Labor Law to individual asking question.
- 10:00 Go to Michelle's office to discuss details of the next EMS Graduation with Michelle. While returning to office, see that Trish is in the front lobby. Close the door from the lobby to the hall, locking her out of the office.
- 10:20 Finish the last of the PCR files to be validated, use a web based uploader to send each file to WebCur (the program we use to process files, store and access the data).

A DAY IN THE LIFE SERIES: PART ONE (CON'T)

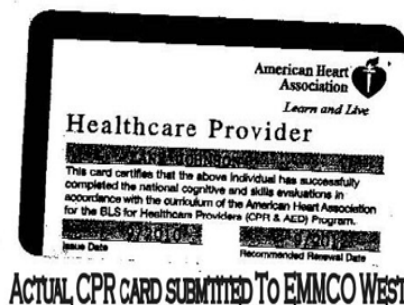
- 10:30 Review emails, forward missed calls and suction reports to Sue. Take phone call regarding inter-facility medications. Answer question, mail copy of drug list and scope of practice to service. (they are not good with email)
- 11:00 Finish sending files to WebCur. Getting hungry. Warm up some leftovers for lunch, have my lunch at my desk while sending the PCR files to the DOH website.
- 11:30 Move PCR data files from working folder on the server to an archive folder.
- 11:35 Check mailbox, return to office with 2 medical command authorizations and 8 medical command physician applications.
- 11:40 Take phone call from DOH regarding a complaint investigation report.
- 11:55 Review 2 medical command authorizations, verify continuing education credits, enter record in EMS Registry and local database.
- 12:15 Phones calls are beginning to pick up as many people call on lunch breaks. Take 2nd call with continuing education record questions.
- 12:45 Take rest of lunch break. Kettlebell exercises, pushups, abdominal work and some stretches 3 days a week, pulling tires the other 2 days.
- 1:15 Review the medical command physician applications. Call DOH for verification that 2 of the physicians were medical command physicians in other parts of the state and get their ID numbers. Scan them to email and send them to Dr. Risavi for final approval.
- 1:45 Dr. Risavi calls and asks for another data analysis related to suction units for one of his medical publications. Grrrrrrr. Write out criteria for the report on paper.
- 2:00 Wireless network is down, reset router. Scrounge around for a snack.
- 3:45 After several other phone calls and returning a few simple email questions, finish report for Dr. Risavi and email it to him. Start preparing for EMS graduation ceremony.
- 4:00 Finish handouts, begin to stuff portfolios with material.
- 4:30 Do dishes and leave.

This is an example of a somewhat mundane day with no examples of serious issues that may require several staff members to discuss and manage. If you found this interesting....you need to get a life...no just kidding. If you found this interesting, maybe someone else in the office will step up to the plate next time and share one of their days with you.

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO YOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION

With the new EMS act taking effect, the DOH has implemented a few changes in the con ed process.

- If you submit anything to our office it must contain your EMS certification number. OK, this is not new, but worth mentioning again. This is the only way that we can be sure that you get the credit you deserve.
- EMMCO West is no longer permitted to accept CPR rosters as proof of completion of CPR. We must see the certificate of completion. You must fax the front and back of the card to our office. We will no longer be able to accept CPR cards that are not submitted in this fashion. This is important for us to be able to verify the class completion and that the card is valid.
- Continuing Education by Endorsement forms are available on our website under education. Each class that has not been approved by the region that you want considered for EMS continuing education credit must be submitted with this form. The form must be complete, including a course outline and course objectives in order to receive continuing education credit. Again, this is not new, but in the past EMMCO West has not required these forms. They will now be required so that we can verify the class took place and justify the hours that were awarded.
- Sponsors have been told not to wait to submit the continuing education credit to the region. In the past, some sponsors have delayed turning the con ed into the region because practitioners did not have their certification number at the time of the class. This is unfair to everyone else and in the very near future may cost the sponsors money. It is your job to make sure you come to the class prepared. That means have your certification card with you if you don't know your number.
- It is the responsibility of the EMS practitioner to make sure that we have a current copy of your CPR card. Many folks call the office thinking that the CPR instructor will submit the cards. CPR instructors are not necessarily DOH instructors and are not required to report this information to us. The system will not recertify your EMS certification if we do not have a current card on file. Please be aware that CPR cards with shaded backgrounds are not able to be read when faxed. If we can't read them, we can't award credit. (see photo below)



IT'S A HOCKEY NIGHT IN ERIE !!

EMMCO West and the Erie Otters have teamed up to bring you EMS Appreciation Night with the Erie Otters on February 25, 2011. All EMS providers will be given a free ticket to the game with a discounted rate for family and friends.

Getting your free ticket is as easy as going to our website under Breaking News and downloading the pdf file with the coupon. Take that coupon to the box office or to the Erie Otters office located behind the Civic Center for your free ticket as well as any discounted tickets you would like to purchase. The discounted rate will be \$10.00/ticket. This is a \$5.50 savings off the regular price.

In addition, we will be selling the 50/50 tickets at the game. All the proceeds that are raised will be donated to Make-A-Wish.

The game begins at 7:00 pm at the Erie Civic Center. We hope that you and your family are able to join us for a great game of hockey with the Erie Otters!



SUCTION UNIT RESULTS

Here is incentive to participate in the Suction Unit Testing QI Project. 2010 data shows that services who participate in the program have a pass rate of 92.77% at licensure inspections as opposed to those who do not participate. Non-participating services have a pass rate of 75.78% at licensure inspections. So, not only is participation in QI projects required by statute, 2010 data shows that participation can increase the chances that your equipment is in a ready state by 17%.

SYMPOSIUM 2011 PLANS UNDERWAY



Symposium 2010 Vendor Area @ Ambassador Conference Center, Erie

The 2011 annual education conference, Symposium 2011, planning is moving into high gear. EMMCO West staff members have been working on this year's event over the past several months. Last year's symposium had the largest number of vendors and participants yet. And this year's Symposium hopes to match or exceed last year's successes.

Symposium 2011 will be held at the Ambassador Conference Center, Erie, PA. The conference starts on Thursday and continues through Sunday (April 7 – 10, 2011). EMS Leaders of Tomorrow (EMSLOT) starts the conference off on Thursday afternoon. The conference features national, state, and regional guest speakers.

Bureau of EMS Director Joseph Schmider and State EMS Medical Director Douglas Kupas, MD, will be presenting the latest information regarding the EMS Act 37 Draft Regulations and Statewide ALS/BLS protocols. Director Schmider will be the master of ceremonies for Saturday evening's EMS Game Show that merges "Let's Make A Deal" with "The Price is Right"!

The theme for Symposium 2011 is TV Game Shows. Several educational sessions follow with the theme and include "The Weakest Link: EMS Edition" and "Are You Smarter Than an EMS Provider". Plus there will be other game show activities at the Saturday evening dinner and at STAT MedEVAC's Party 2011.

Friday evening will be a special Vendor Night from 5 – 7PM. Product vendors will feature the latest public safety items available to EMS agencies and providers. The vendor area will be open Friday and Saturday April 8 & 9, 2011.

A Chinese auction of gift baskets will be held in conjunction with Symposium 2011. Proceeds from the auction will be donated to Make A Wish foundation. Gift baskets are requested from EMS agencies and providers for the auction.

Look for conference brochures and website information to be available around the middle of February 2011.

RECOGNITION AWARDS ANNOUNCED FOR EMS PROVIDERS

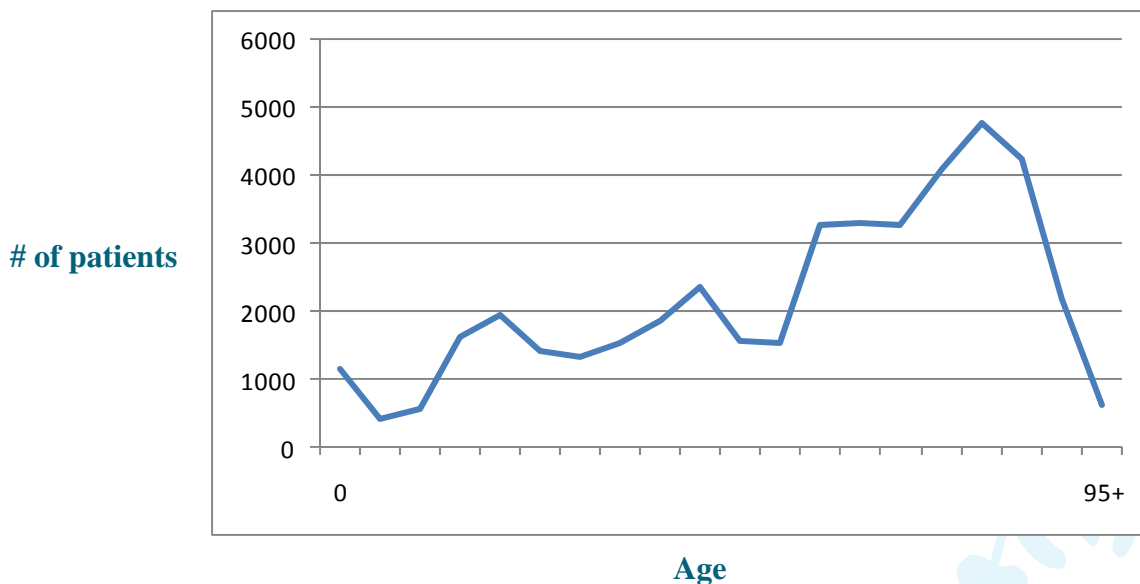
EMMCO West is pleased to announce this year’s nominations for several EMS provider categories. Included this year are “EMS Achievement Award”, “Volunteer Of the Year”, and new this year is “Mentor Of the Year”. Available for download on the EMMCO West website, www.emmco.org, under Breaking News, is the award information. Nominations are due by March 15, 2011 for these awards.

At Symposium 2011 Saturday, April 9, 2011 dinner, the EMS Achievement Award and Volunteer Of the Year awards will be presented. At a future EMS graduation ceremony, the Mentor Of the Year award will be presented.

It’s vital that we honor our EMS professionals with this recognition. As these EMS providers perform their profession in often less than desirable circumstances and situations. Despite these challenges, they continue to deliver outstanding care to their patients.

Take time now to nominate an EMS colleague for one of this year’s awards.

THIS IS A REPORT ON AGE BREAKDOWNS FOR EMERGENCY CALLS FROM 01/01/10 TO 06/30/10.



For example, the age group from 50-54 years old had 1578 patients. More detailed reports are available upon request.

EMS GRADUATIONS

This past Fall 2010, EMMCO West began to conduct EMS graduation ceremonies for newly certified EMS personnel. First Responders, EMTs, and Paramedics are being recognized for their successful completion of their EMS training and certification. “There’s a lot of commitment and energy shown by these personnel to complete their educational courses,” says Executive Director William McClincy. McClincy adds, “it’s not just their desire to seek out these EMS courses but it involves their families support to successfully complete them. That’s why we’ve invited the student and their families to these EMS graduation ceremonies.”



EMMCO West staff member Christopher Heile conceived and has spearheaded this project. At the graduations the students and their family members get to enjoy great food and snacks to start the ceremony. The newly certified EMS personnel receive a recognition certificate from EMMCO West, some gifts, photo id certification card, CD ROM of various EMS documents, and an orientation to the PA Department of Health continuing education process.

There’s been a great deal of support shown by EMS system stakeholders. These stakeholders have included Clarion Hospital, Hamot Medical Center, St. Vincent Health Center, UPMC Horizon Greenville, Superior Ambulance, and EmeryCare. All have helped make these EMS graduations possible. Additional EMS stakeholders are working with EMMCO West staff to help organize future EMS graduation ceremonies.

These EMS graduation ceremonies are part of EMMCO West’s commitment to recognize the accomplishments of EMS personnel. Recognition, recruitment, and retention are part of the “5 R’s” that the PA Department of Health has focused its efforts on over the past several years. Strides towards improved respect of the EMS profession/professionals and reimbursement of EMS system resources have been made over the past several years.

EMS agencies and system stakeholders are asked to help welcome newly certified EMS personnel into the EMS family. We welcome the newly certified EMS personnel to their newly chosen profession and wish them success in their career pursuits.

JAMES WITT FEATURED SPEAKER AT NWP AERG'S ANNUAL MEETING



The former director of FEMA is coming to the Northwestern Pennsylvania Emergency Response Group's Annual Meeting being held at Edinboro University on **March 8, 2011**.

Mr. James L. Witt is the CEO of Witt Associates. Mr. Witt was the director of FEMA from 1993 – 2001. He was the architect of federal government programs related to emergency preparedness and mitigation, response, and recovery. He has experience in emergency management on the state and local levels. Mr. Witt has experience integrating community-based disaster management with national emergency management strategies.

Mr. Witt is scheduled to speak on strategic planning considerations for preparing for terrorism in the coming years.

The Northwest PA Emergency Response Group's meeting information is as follows:

March 8, 2011

10:00 AM

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Frank G. Pogue Student Center

405 Scotland Road

Edinboro, PA 16444

Program Location is the Multi-Purpose Room

A working lunch will be provided to all guests

Parking available off Tartan Rd off Scotland Rd in Commuter Lot

This presentation is for all open to all NWP AERG's Subcommittee members, as well as local, county, regional, state, and federal public safety partners.

Please RSVP no later than March 1, 2011 to Mr. David Rockwell at drockwell@mercyhurst.edu.



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